A SERMON

Preach'd at the

PRIMARY VISITATION

OF THE

Right Reverend Father in GOD,

WILLIAM

Lord Bishop of NORWICH.

Held at *Beccles* the 23*d* of *April*, 1686.

By *SAMUEL CRISPE*, M. A. and Vicar of *Bungay St. Trinity* in the County of *Suffolk*.

IMPRIMATUR.

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To the Right Reverend Father in God, William Lord Bishop of *Norwich.*

My Lord,

I *Humbly beg your Lordship's Pardon that I tell the World, It is not from any wanton inclination to appear in Print, that I Publish this Discourse, (as I hope all that know the Author will witness) but in dutiful compliance with your Lordship's desires. I know nothing that could recommend it to your Lordship's liking, but the honesty of its Design; as being mainly intended to reconcile and promote those great Duties of Fidelity to the Church, and Loyalty to the King, which some ill men would make inconsistent. And if I may hereby any way serve the Friends of our Church, or undeceive some misguided Zealots, by exposing the treachery of False Brethren, and shewing the mischief and danger of an ungovernable Zeal, I shall think my self abundantly Rewarded, tho' I meet with such Censures as do usually accompany undertakings of this nature.*

My Lord, I cannot forbear, having this occasion, to acquaint your Lordship with the great satisfaction your honest Clergy have under your prudent and watchful Government; And to assure your Lordship, That as we owe the Blessing to God and the King, who could not have given us greater assurance of his Kindness to this Church (besides that of his own Royal Word) than by filling up these high Stations with such Men; so we shall think our selves oblig'd in Duty and Gratitude, by our utmost endeavours against Vice and Faction, to make your Government as easy as may be. That your Lordship may Live to see the happy effects of it, and after many days be Translated into the Blessed society of Apostles and good Bishops to reap the Reward; and that this Diocess may never want such Men to fill the Chair, as both can and will do good amongst us, is the hearty Prayer of,

My LORD,

Your Lordship's most Obedient

and most Humble Servant,

SAM. CRISPE.

1 KINGS xviii. 21.

And Elijah came unto all the people, and said, How long halt ye between two opinions? If the Lord be God, follow him; but if Baal, then follow him.

IN the days of *Ahab*, it ſeems, the people of *Iſrael* were not ſo thoroughly reconcil'd to the abſurdities of an Idol, but they retain'd ſome kind thoughts towards the worſhip of the Living God, tho' they had not the courage plainly and freely to own and ſtick to it. To cure this infirmity of theirs, the great *Elijah* comes inſpired with Zeal and Courage, and ſaid, *How long halt ye between two opinions? If the Lord be God, follow him; but if Baal, then follow him*: He could not endure this ſhuffling in Religion, but would have them ſteady either to God or *Baal*; and therefore propoſed a way of tryal which did moſt effectually determine their choice. For when the people ſaw the Prophets of *Baal* ſo miſerably baffled, that there was neither voice, nor any to anſwer, nor any that regarded; and that God had ſo ſignally from Heaven atteſted the Authority of his own Prophet, by ſending down Fire to conſume the Sacrifice in the view of them all: this was ſo ſenſible a demonſtra-

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tion of the matter, that they could not but own the Conviction; and therefore we read, *ver.* 39. *They fell upon their faces, and said, The Lord he is the God, the Lord he is the God.*

The Words of the Text are a ſmart invective againſt unſetled Neutrality, or diſſembling in matters of Religion; and do recommend to us eſpecially theſe two Things:

I. That we take care to make a right choice of Religion.

II. That we be faithful to it, and do not betray it by any halting compliance, but that we aſſert it with Zeal and Reſolution.

I. As to the Firſt, Religion being a matter of the greateſt concernment, both in order to our preſent comfort and future happineſs, it will appear to be not only our Duty, but our Intereſt to chuſe ſuch a one as ſhall beſt ſecure to us thoſe ends. Now if we look abroad in the world, we ſhall meet with ſo many officious Guides in this affair, that offer themſelves with an equal reſpect and concernment for us; ſuch variety of Opinions and Profeſſions, while one cries, Lo, here is Chriſt; and another as confidently, Lo, he is there; as will mightily confound our ſearch.

It cannot be denied, but that this diverſity of Opinions, and Diſputes about Religion, has had a very ill influence upon weak and ſenſual Minds; while ſome have thought it beſt to be of none at all, leſt they ſhould miſtake the right; and others whoſe Luſts have prompted them to it, have been ready to believe, at leaſt to pretend, that all our ſtir about it, is but a Cheat, and there

there is really no such thing. Whereas every Man that is wise and sober, will be so far from making these wild deductions, that he will rather think it his greatest interest to look well about him, and use his utmost Caution, lest he should be mis-led by some ignorant or crafty Guide, and so finally miscarry. And that we are to make use of our Reason in the search, and not presently resign up our Faith to every bold Pretender, appears from this Instance in the Text: For otherwise to what purpose should the Prophet have troubled the *Jews* about God or *Baal*, or himself about a fiery Tryal to assert his Authority? This had been but idle impertinence, if they were not to make use of their Reason, or were presently to submit to every one that pretends the stamp of Divine Authority by a blind and unexamining obedience. Therefore we find he appeals to their Reason and Understanding in a plain matter of Fact, and requires their assent no further than their Reason should be convinced. This has been the way which God has all along made use of to introduce and settle his own Religion in the World: For what are Miracles, but an appeal to our Senses? These were those Divine Credentials, by which *Moses* and the Prophets, our Saviour and his Apostles evidenc'd their Commission to the World. And the Divine Wisdom foreseeing that there would be some so bold as to counterfeit the Seal of Heaven, pretending to work Miracles for the Confirmation of their Doctrines, has made this further provision, that his People of old might not be impos'd upon, by giving them a standing Rule by which they should distinguish true and real Miracles from those that were false and counterfeit, *Deut.* 13. 1, 2.

And

And that men might not be too easie and credulous in receiving mens Doctrines and Pretences, but examine and search well into them, before they resign up their Faith, our Saviour cautions his Disciples, That they should take heed that no man deceive them; and that there should arise false Christs, and false Prophets: And St. *Peter* tells us, that there should be false Teachers, who should privily bring in damnable Heresies, and that many should follow their pernicious ways: And St. *John* advises, *Believe not every Spirit, but try the Spirits, whether they be of God.*

Now he that has been thus careful to caution us against delusion and imposture, upon the hazard of our eternal interest, we cannot believe, has been so wanting to his creatures, as to leave them without sufficient means to avoid it; this would be but an exprobration of our misery, and would not be agreeable to those many serious professions he has made, that he would have all men to be saved, and to come to the knowledg of the Truth. We must therefore necessarily believe, since we cannot now expect Fire from Heaven, or the interposition of a Miracle to determine our choice, that the same wise and good Providence has made some other provision for Mankind, and appointed him a Guide that may safely conduct him in his way to Life and Happiness.

Now there are Three Things that offer their Guidance to us in this great Affair.

1. The Authority of a particular Church.
2. The private Spirit.
3. The Holy Scriptures.

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As to the first, The Church of *Rome* indeed challengeth the Authority of an Infallible Guidance, pretending her self the only Repository of the Ancient Faith and Practice, which has been preserved from the Apostles times, pure and unmixt, by an unerring Tradition. Now if we could be assured, that God has set up such an Infallible Guide upon Earth, which is only to be found in that Church, I confess we should want a fair Apology for our Separation; and it would be the greatest blemish upon the Reformation, that we have deserted the Communion of that Church, where our Salvation might have been most happily secured. But when we consider that they themselves cannot agree about the Seat of this Infallibility, supposing it fix'd to the See of *Rome*; as also what Doctrines have been introduc'd under this pretence; we shall have no reason to repent our leaving that Church that pretends to a Guide, that can no where be found, or if it could, would serve only to lead us into very great Errors.

2. To examine the Guidance of the private Spirit, which is nothing else but the Personal Infallibility of the Enthusiast, whose pretensions to Inspiration are so wild and extravagant, as nothing can be more: For when we consider, that these Men can never prove their Inspirations to the World, without a constant Succession of Miracles, which the wiser and more sober part of Mankind will require as an evidence and demonstration of the Spirit, and which they have not yet the boldness to pretend to: That their Opinions and Principles are inconsistent, and oft-times contrary to one another; and that not on-

ly in ſeveral Men, but at ſeveral times in the ſame Perſons; which they could not be, if they proceeded from the Holy Spirit, which is but One, and therefore always uniform and conſiſtent with it ſelf. That the natural effects of Melancholy and Diſeaſe, or the illuſions of the Devil, are frequently miſtaken for Divine Illumination. That Doctrines contrary to common Reaſon, and the natural Religion of Mankind, have been obtruded upon the World under this Pretence: And in fine, when we conſider what havock this has made in the World; how it has been abuſed to the worſt deſigns, the murder of Princes, the overturning of Kingdoms and Churches; and that there is nothing ſo vile or monſtrous, earthly, ſenſual or deviliſh, but if this pretence be admitted, may paſs for Inſpiration; I think we may ſafely refuſe their Guidance, and conclude that theſe men, theſe Spirits, cannot be from God. Since therefore there is no truſting either to the *Roman* Infallibility, or this new Light, the private Spirit of the Enthuſiaſt, I ſhall ſhew,

3. That the Holy Scripture is the only ſafe Guide we can follow. To which if we apply our ſelves with due modeſty and Humility in our Enquiries, and a careful uſe of thoſe miniſterial Aids of the Chriſtian Church which God has appointed, we cannot miſs our way: And this will oblige us not to reſt in our own private Judgments for the ſenſe of Scripture, but to take the concurrent ſenſe of the Catholick Church in the firſt and pureſt Ages of it; which may reaſonably be preſumed the moſt Authentick and credible Witneſſes of the Apoſtolical Faith and Practice. And if we thus appeal to the Catholick Church for the

the ſenſe of Scripture, not as the Sovereign and abſolute Judg, but as a credible Witneſs, as on the one hand we ſhall avoid the charge of private Interpretion, ſo of the *Roman* Infallibility on the other: Altho' herein we make uſe of our own Reaſon in the ſearch, and withal give a juſt deference to Authority.

Had this Modeſty and Care been faithfully obſerved in Mens Enquiries after Truth, there be Thouſands of Errors which had never appear'd to diſturb the Peace of the Church. But when men, out of Pride or Wantonneſs ſhall forſake the Guides of Gods Appointment, and heap to themſelves Teachers, having itching Ears, no wonder that God ſhould give them over to ſtrong deluſions, that they ſhould believe a Lye.

Now if we ſearch the Scriptures with theſe helps, they will abundantly reward our pains, and in the end lead us to the beſt Church and Religion in the World, the Religion and Church of *England*.

A Church Reformed after the pattern of Scripture, and the firſt and pureſt Ages of Chriſtianity; her Government, by the moſt Authentick Records derived from the Apoſtles, or at leaſt Apoſtolical Men? Her Articles of Religion, not only contained in Scripture, but delivered down to us by the concurrent ſenſe of the Ancient Church: Her Prayers and Praiſes offered up to God alone, through the Merits and Mediation of the Holy Jeſus, in her own native Language, ſuited to the general wants and occaſions of Men; and performed with that decency and ſolemnity, as becomes the devout Worſhippers of God: Her Rites and Ceremonies few and proper, and ſuch as are allow-

ed to be of very ancient uſe: Her Homilies plain and wholeſome Inſtructions to Vertue and good Life: Her Diſcipline admirably fitted to chaſtize and reduce the diſorderly.

And all this we freely offer to the ſearch and examination of the moſt inquiſitive: Our Religion will endure the Light, and abide the ſevereſt Trial: and would men become calm and ſober, and examine it without Paſſion or Prejudice, they would quickly ſee that the Terms of our Communion are infinitely reaſonable; That we impoſe no Doctrines, but what are very agreeable to the Reaſon of Mankind: That we own no ſuch Principles as tend to debauch Mens Conſciences and reconcile them to wicked Practices: But on the contrary, that the Doctrines which we profeſs, the Rules and Orders under which we live, and the whole Frame and Conſtitution of our Church, is moſt admirably fitted to promote Peace and Holineſs, the great ends of the Goſpel. And whereever theſe great ends of Religion are left unſecured, it muſt needs render that Church or Society of Men ſuſpected. For ſober Men will never believe that that Religion can be of God, that any way encourageth Vice and Wickedneſs, or diſturbs the peace of the World.

Now this can never be charged upon the Doctrines and Principles of the Church of *England*: A Church, whoſe main deſign is to promote Holineſs amongſt Men: And for the Loyalty of her Principles, it muſt be owned to her Eternal Honour, that in all the Changes and Revolutions of Government, ſhe has been the ſteadieſt Friend to the Crown

of

of any Church in the World, and that ſometimes when ſhe could have no proſpect of ſecular advantages to induce her. Look into her Articles, her Canons, her Liturgy, her Homilies; and you will find ſhe teaches the old Primitive Loyalty, to obey for Conſcience ſake, and to ſubmit without reſerve or limitation: And had a Prince no other Subjects within his Dominions, but Men of Church of *England* Principles, he would certainly have the eaſieſt and the happieſt Government in the World. May our Governours therefore ever be convinced, That it is not leſs their Intereſt than duty, to encourage and protect that Church, which by long experience has approved it ſelf one of the ſureſt props of the Throne.

Having therefore a Religion that does upon all theſe accounts recommend it ſelf to our choice, I ſuppoſe I need ſay the leſs to perſwade to the Second Thing propounded.

II. That we be faithful to it, and not betray it by any halting compliance, but that we aſſert it with Zeal and Reſolution; wherein we muſt be careful,

1. That it be not a fiery ungovernable Zeal, but that being founded in Knowledg, and guided by diſcretion, the means which we uſe as well as the ends we propound be good and warrantable.

2. That we approve our Zeal for Religion by an univerſal Holineſs and good Life.

1. That we be faithful to our Religion, and not betray it by any halting compliance with the Worſhip of a ſtrange God. Truth

Truth is too great a purchace to be parted with for Trifles. And one would think we ſhould with the utmoſt Reſolution ſtudy the Peace and Honour of that Church and Religion, which was ſealed to us with the Blood of Martyrs: But when men make Religion truckle to ſecular Intereſt, which they endeavour by all means to promote by a luke-warm indifferency, or baſe compliance, it is too plain that they have no great value for that Religion, which was purchaſed at ſo great a Price, but that they have taken it up upon faſhion, or to ſerve ſome ill deſign. The Prophet in the Text ſure never lived in a more halting Age than we do; wherein we have a ſort of prudential Churchmen, like thoſe the Apoſtle foretold ſhould be in perillous times, men that are lovers of themſelves; they wiſely conſider that Truth and Sincerity are but Names, but Lives and Eſtates are real Things; and therefore they'l be ſure to keep out of harms way, and engage themſelves no farther in any Party, than they may come off with Honour and Safety; as for Religion, they are reſolved it ſhall never coſt them much: But ſince 'tis convenient to be of one, they'l be ſure to appear for that which is uppermoſt and moſt popular; and becauſe of the viciſſitude of humane affairs, 'twill be convenient at the ſame time to keep a private correſpondence with ſome potent Faction: This man is a Chriſtian at large, he can go to Church or to a Conventicle, as intereſt or opportunity ſhall incline him; he is for Moderation; he is for giving no offence, neither to the *Jew* nor *Gentile*, nor to the Church of God; and therefore knows

knows how to ſuit his humour and converſe to the company he meets; and when he happens to be at the publick Prayers of the Church (to which he has no great liking) he has a fine ambiguous way of behaviour, ſtanding up during the whole Service, that he may not be ſaid rudely to affront the Congregation, or to bow the Knee to *Baal*; he can bow even in the Houſe of *Rimmon* to ſecure a good place, and hope that the Lord will pardon his Servant in that thing.

To be thus looſe and ſhuffling in matters of Religion, where ſure men ſhould be in good earneſt; to mock God and the King by acting contrary to their Principles and the ſenſe of their own minds, muſt needs render them the ſhame and ſcandal of their Profeſſion: 'Twas a ſaying of King *James*, He that diſſembles with God, is not fit to be truſted by men: Not much unlike that of *Conſtantius*, who in the beginning of his Empire calling his Servants about him, and propoſing that thoſe who would Sacrifice to the Gods ſhould continue their Places and their Honours, but thoſe who refuſed, ſhould depart the Court, proſcribed the Heathens, and continued thoſe Chriſtians in his Service, who choſe rather to forſake the Profits and Honours of the Court, than their Religion, with this ſaying, πῶς γὰρ ἂν πίστι βασιλεῖ πίστιν φυλάξαι, τὸν πρὸ τοῦ κρεῖττον ἀλόγιστα ἀγνοήσαντα; *Euſeb. de vita Conſtant. l.* 16. And I think the Government has very lately had ſuch experience of the falſhood and treachery of this ſort of men, that they will ever be looked upon with a jealous eye. Who were the great Agitators and leading men in the late

late Conſpiracy and Rebellion, but ſuch as ſeemed to comply with the eſtabliſhed Government, came to our Churches, heard Divine Service and Sermon, and now and then received the Sacrament? And all that they might be thought to be of the ſame Communion with us, and that we might not ſuſpect danger from men of ſuch agreeable and complying tempers: But by this means they have the more effectually compaſſed their deſigns. For certainly there is no ſuch dangerous Enemy, as one within our own Walls, that can betray us unſuſpected. And the miſery of it is, while men are poiſoned with ſuch Principles as theſe, that they may take Oaths in their own ſenſe, hold occaſional Communion with our Church, and now and then to ſerve a turn, receive the Sacrament, we can never be ſecure; For there will ever be men of looſe Principles, who will be ſure to ſhrowd themſelves amongſt us, either to ſhelter themſelves from the penalty of the Law, or to undermine and betray us: And as it is the ruin of all Societies, whether Sacred or Civil, where Mens Profeſſions and Pretences are only Traps and Snares; ſo it is equally deſtructive to the pleaſure and ſecurity of mutual Converſation; for how unhappy muſt it needs be, when men are forced to keep a guard upon themſelves, by reaſon of the falſhood and inſincerity of thoſe they converſe with?

And as the Church has ſuffered extremely and is in continual danger from theſe men, ſo alſo from her own halting Clergy: It is not improbable that this lame and partial Conformity has contributed as much to the growth of Faction, as any one thing

thing we can name, ſince the Churches Reſtauration; for the people have readily concluded, that certainly there muſt be ſomething ill in our Worſhip and Ceremonies, otherwiſe ſuch Men as have had Ability and Opportunity to look into theſe things, and are under the obligation of Oaths and Subſcriptions, would ſhew their liking and aſſent to them by a more Regular Conformity. But nothing has more recommended the Clergy to ſome men, than this ſort of Moderation: They are not for the height of Conformity, but for the moderate Man, who, in their ſenſe, is one that knows how to comply with weak and tender Conſciences, tho' it be againſt the ſenſe of his own: One that can give the Sacrament Standing or Kneeling: That can Baptize at Home, or at Church; and there, with the ſign of the Croſs, or without it: Viſit the Sick with the Churches Prayers or his own, as the Perſon is inclined: He can civilly be from home when a Diſſenter is to be buried: He has no Scruple againſt the Surplice, but only that 'tis too hot for him in Summer, and too cold in Winter.

Theſe Illegal Reconciling Methods, however they may be called by the fine Names of Moderation, Diſcretion and Prudence; or whatever pretence they make to Peace and Union, can never ſerve the Intereſt of Religion, or ſecure the Honour and Safety of the Church. This I am ſure of, had the Clergy of *England*, upon

the Reſtauration of the Church and Government, continued Regular and Uniform in their Adminiſtrations, with a due exerciſe of the Churches Diſcipline, we ſhould by this time have ſeen much better effects of it, than we have hitherto done from Indulgence or Moderation. Men would have been generally reconciled to the Orders of our Church, and we ſhould have reapt the fruits of it in Eaſe and Honour. But when the Clergy themſelves have given Example and Encouragement to Men to break the Churches Laws, and contemn her Authority, no wonder that Vice and Faction appears inſolent and daring.

And how it can conſiſt with the peace of thoſe Mens Conſciences, who have upon mature deliberation and choice, declared their unfeigned Aſſent and Conſent; who have no Authority to make any abatement or relaxation of eſtabliſhed Laws and Conſtitutions, but have ſolemnly obliged themſelves to obſerve them, I cannot imagine. For ſince 'tis but reaſonable that the Church ſhould be ſecured of the Fidelity of thoſe whom ſhe admits and entruſts in the publick Offices of Religion, and that accordingly we have all of us given this ſecurity ſo far as Oaths and Subſcriptions will bind us; ſure nothing leſs than a Power equal to that which at firſt obliged us, can diſcharge us from the Obligation. We have the Canons and Rubricks of the Church laid before us,

to

to be the meaſure of our practice: And where things are doubtfully expreſſed, till we can be ſo happy as to have them otherwiſe ſettled, I preſume we are to be determined by the uſage of the Church. We are not yet Reformers; and 'tis not modeſt to oppoſe our own private fancies to the publick Wiſdom and Authority of a whole Church.

Peace and Union, 'tis true, are deſirable things; and at this time eſpecially to be purchaſed at any rate, except with the loſs of Truth: And I know none of the Clergy but would moſt willingly ſubmit, for the ſake of Peace, to ſuch abatements as our Governours ſhould think fit to make in the behalf of modeſt and peaceable Diſſenters: But we have no Authority to do it of our ſelves. And therefore in the mean time, tho' we are to endeavour by all the methods of Prudence and Candour, by all lawful compliances and condeſcenſions, to oblige theſe men; we are to take care of our own Conſciences, and continue true to that Church, to which we have plighted our Faith, and given all the ſecurity imaginable of a ſteady and exact Conformity.

And therefore as we would not diſſemble with God and the World; as we would not confirm Men in their Miſtakes and Prejudices, and ſo perpetuate the Schiſm; as we have any ſenſe of Honour or Conſcience, let us no longer halt

between two Opinions, but follow the Lord; and be ſteady to our Principles. Let us keep cloſe to the Rules and Canons of the Church; this will be our Security and our Wiſdom: Let us not forget the Relation we ſtand in to the Church: We are the Churches Stewards; and the Apoſtle tells us, 'tis required in Stewards that they be found faithful: Let us not therefore betray the Truſt repoſed in us, and baſely proſtitute the Honour of the Prieſthood to mean and unworthy Things, the Luſts and Humours of Men; but do our Duties impartially and without reſpect of Perſons: For if when we are admitted into the Churches Service, and take her Pay, we play faſt and looſe, and keep a private correſpondence with the Churches Enemies, we, like *Judas*, take the Purſe, and betray the Maſter. The favour of God and ſome few good Men, the inward Peace and Satisfaction of Conſcience, that in all ſimplicity and Godly Sincerity, we have had our Converſation in the World; and the great Rewards of Truth and Faithfulneſs in the Life to come, will abundantly compenſate whatever Trouble or Diſcouragement we may meet withal in the doing of our Duty, and infinitely outweigh the poor and mean advantages of Popularity. Let us all therefore who have had both the Honour and Bleſſing of the ſame Epiſcopal Impoſition of Hands, ſtudy in our ſeveral capacities to promote the Peace and Welfare of this Church; which we can no way more effectually

fectually do, than by walking by the ſame Rule, and minding the ſame things; That in one and the ſame Church, we may all ſpeak and do the ſame things; and with one mind, and one mouth, and in one Way glorifie the Father of the Lord Jeſus: This will look like the face of a Church: Thus ſhall we equally bear the burden, which now lies heavy on the ſhoulders of ſome few: We ſhall be better able to defend our ſelves againſt thoſe who oppoſe us; and ſober men will be fix'd in our Communion, when they ſee this Uniformity in our Practice, who pretend to be kept in continual fluctuation and doubtfulneſs, by this Diſagreement and Faction among our ſelves.

And thus it becomes all Perſons whatſoever, eſpecially ſuch as are in Publick ſtation, whoſe influence and example is great, to be true to that Church of which they profeſs themſelves members; and to have a juſt concernment for that Faith and Religion, by which they expect to be ſaved: Not to be diſcouraged from the Profeſſion thereof by the fears of danger, or courted to a compliance with a falſe one by the hopes of favour; but upon all needful and fitting occaſions to ſtand in the gap, and aſſert it with Zeal and Reſolution; that the Enemies of our Church may be convinced, that however the coldneſs and indifferency of ſome of her Members may have encouraged their attempts upon us, yet there are others, and thoſe of the wiſer and better part of Mankind, that have a

due value and regard for their Religion, and will not eaſily part with it; This will entail a Bleſſing upon them and theirs; Their Names will be mentioned with Honour and Reſpect by future Generations, and their Memory ſhall be bleſſed. Whereas if they betray the Truth by ſilence or ſinful compliance; the preſent Ages will count themſelves unfortunate in ſuch; Ages to come will curſe them, and the opportunities which God had put into their hands, will riſe up in judgment againſt them.

Now tho' a Zeal for Religion be our duty, yet we muſt be careful,

1. That it be not a fiery ungovernable Zeal, but that being founded in knowledg, and guided by diſcretion, the means which we uſe, as well as the means we propound, be good and warrantable. Whoever pretends to follow the Lord, muſt be ſure to follow him in his own way. True Zeal is not a blind heady paſſion that puts men upon violent and irregular courſes beyond the bounds of ſober Reaſon; but a ſteady and well-weighed reſolution of mind, making uſe of fitting means for the obtaining of honeſt and worthy deſigns. When mens paſſions mix with their Religion, their Zeal commonly degenerates into rage and fury, and is a kind of Wild-fire, which if not timely prevented, will ſet the Government in a Flame. And therefore if our Care and Concernment for Religion ſhall tranſport

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as into irreverent and undutiful reflections upon our Governours, traducing their Perſons or Government, or into Seditious and Diſloyal practices, we may be ſure 'tis not true Piety that animates our Zeal.

To uſe the Words of the Apoſtle, If there be any amongſt us that ſeemeth to be Religious, to have a Zeal and Concernment for Religion, and yet bridleth not his Tongue, but gives it an unbounded Licence to wound even the Reputation of his Governours, he does but deceive his own Heart; let him pretend what he will, his Zeal is not right, that mans Religion is vain. For Religion teacheth us to be Modeſt and Humble, Meek and Patient; to live in a peaceful Submiſſion to that Prince and Government, under which Providence ſhall place us; to harbour no unkind reſentments of him; not to ſpeak Reproachfully of his Perſon or Government, but to ſtudy to be quiet and do our own buſineſs. So that if our Zeal for Religion ſhall tranſport us into ſuch undue practices as do no way become modeſt and peaceable Subjects, we do but deceive our ſelves; we may have a Zeal for meer Notions and Opinions, but can have no great concernment for thoſe Subſtantial and practical duties which Religion lays upon us.

We ought to be tender of the Reputation of Princes, upon the greateſt reaſons of duty and intereſt. In the Law of *Moſes*, men were expreſ-

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ly forbidden to revile the Gods, or ſpeak evil of the Ruler of the People. And we find this was the Religion of St. *Paul*, as appears from his acknowledgment before the *Jewiſh Sanhedrim*: For when he was provoked in a ſudden paſſion to ſpeak unadviſedly with his Lips, and to call the High Prieſt *Whited-Wall*, he preſently checked himſelf for it, and acknowledged his fault; that he did not well conſider to whom he ſpake; for it is written, *Thou ſhalt not ſpeak evil of the Ruler of the People.* So that tho' the Apoſtles were ready upon ſeveral occaſions to aſſert their juſt Rights and Priviledges with ſome boldneſs and freedom againſt thoſe who invaded them, (as did the two Apoſtles, St. *Paul* and *Silas*, being Impriſoned and Scourged at *Philippi*, and St. *Paul* in his Appeal to *Cæſar*) yet they wiſely forbore bitter and reproachful Language, tho' ſometimes they met with the hardeſt meaſure, and ſuffered contrary to Law. *Being reviled we bleſs, being perſecuted we ſuffer, being defamed we entreat and pray to God for them.*

But if this were not our duty, yet the neceſſary care of the Government, Intereſt and Self-preſervation ſhould oblige us. For this Undutiful behaviour towards thoſe whom God has ſet over us, whereby Majeſty becomes vile and contemptible, does not only expoſe us to be affronted by every inſulting Neighbour, but is the ready way to exaſperate our Governours againſt us; and certainly tends to the ruin and diſſolution of the

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Government, under which we now ſit in peace and ſafety, every man under his own Vine, and under his own Figtree. The Apoſtle St. *James* ſpeaking of an ungovernable Tongue, has expreſſed the miſchief of it in thoſe words, *It ſets on Fire the whole courſe of Nature*, puts Kingdoms and Churches in a Flame. And we know this Flouriſhing Monarchy was once ruined from ſuch beginnings. Government therefore being of Divine Inſtitution, and deſigned to preſerve mankind in peace and ſafety, we are bound to do our utmoſt to ſupport it, even for our own preſervation. He that like *Sampſon* pulls down the Pillars of the Houſe, is like to be Buried in its Ruin. For where there is no Law or Government to defend us, there can be no ſecurity of Eſtates or Lives, but every man is expoſed to him that is ſtronger than himſelf, and Nations will be turned into *Aceldama's*.

And if we are not to ſpeak evil of our Governours, to leſſen the Authority and Reputation of their Government, much leſs are we to take Arms againſt them, tho' under pretence of Zeal for the beſt Church and Religion in the World. The preſervation of Religion, 'tis true, is of the greateſt and moſt important concern to mankind, dearer than Lives and Fortunes: But 'tis ſuch a lewd affront to the Almighty to go about to defend his Cauſe by breaking his Laws, as his Soul hateth: As if he could not bring about his own ends, without our wickedneſs, but the Devil muſt be

called in to assist and carry on the cause of Religion.

Popular Tumults and Insurrections can never serve the interest of Religion, or make the Church Glorious. So that if we consult as well the Honour of Religion as our own safety, it will ever be the wisest course to sit down peaceably under that Government wherein Providence shall place us: To raise no Tumults, to speak or do nothing that is Seditious, but to submit to all civil and just Laws; and where we cannot obey with a safe Conscience (which God be thanked is not our case) to suffer patiently rather than desert our Religion, or embroil the Government. This will be a much better way of expressing our Zeal, and bring more Honour to Religion, than whole Armies of Rebels, tho the Holy Bible be displayed in their Banner.

Princes, we know, are the immediate Servants and Deputies of the great Soveraign of the World, whom he has placed under himself in the affairs of Government. They receive their Trusts from him, and to him alone they are accountable. And if we suffer any rigours or oppressions from their Government, he, who is the great Patron of Truth and Righteousness, will take the matter into his own Hand: to him only we must appeal, and with submissive silence expect the appointed way and time of deliverance, which in his own Wise Providence he has assigned. But when men shall grow fierce and ungovernable, despise dominion,

nion, and ſpeak evil of Dignities, diſturb the publick peace, break through all Civil and ſacred ties of duty, and all this under pretence of Zeal for Religion, when 'tis plain it's their Luſts and Paſſions, their want of Religion which is the real cauſe; this brings ſcandal to Religion, and is ſuch groſs mockery of God, as he will by no means endure.

Let us therefore of this Church, who have ever had the Reputation of Peaceable and good Subjects, take care that we do nothing that may forfeit that Character. Let not our Zeal againſt Popery betray us into ſome of the worſt principles that are charg'd upon that Church: But while we are Zealous for our Church, let us continue Loyal to our King. God has now put an opportunity into our Hands, which if we manage well, will bring honour to our Church, and for ever put to ſilence the Ignorance of fooliſh men. We have already acquitted our ſelves of the Calumny of Popery, to the eternal ſhame of our Accuſers; let us hold as ſteady to our Principles in our Allegiance to the Crown; and then ſhall we give unto *Cæſar the things that are Cæſars, as well as unto God the things that are Gods.*

But moſt eſpecially it will behove the Clergy of this Church, who may be ſaid, I hope without offence, to have as great a ſenſe of Loyalty as any ſort of men in the World, and to have deſerved as well of the Government, to uſe our utmoſt endeavours to quiet the minds of men, and diſpoſe them to Meekneſs and Submiſſion. To which we are obliged not only by the

Civil and Eccleſiaſtical Laws of the Government, but alſo by vertue of an Apoſtolical Canon; for when St. *Paul* gave it in charge to *Titus* Biſhop of *Crete*, That he ſhould put them in mind to be ſubject to Principalities and Powers, and obey Magiſtrates, he did without queſtion oblige all the ſucceeding Preachers of the Goſpel in the diſcharge of their Miniſterial Office, to preſs the ſame duties of Obedience and Subjection; and however ſuch men have been cryed up of old for the faithful Diſpenſers of the Word, who have been Trumpeters of Sedition, and preached and prayed Men into Rebellion, I am ſure it no way becomes thoſe who profeſs themſelves the Servants and Embaſſadors of Jeſus the Prince of Peace.

Laſtly, Let us take care that we approve our zeal for the Church, by an univerſal Holineſs and good Life. 'Tis not our contending about meer Notions and Opinions; nor is it our being warm and active to promote the intereſt of a Party, that will denominate us truly zealous, while we have no regard in our Lives and Practices to thoſe duties which Religion lays upon us. An Orthodox Faith, and a good Life muſt go together, or our Zeal is not right: Without this, I mean the exerciſe of an inward and real Holineſs, all our glorious pretences and ſhews of Zeal, are but intemperate Heats, Phariſaick Appearances and mockeries of God. We are not ſenſible what miſchief that man does Religion, and ſcandal to the Church, that lives within the Communion of it, and makes a great profeſſion of Zeal, when his Life and Practice

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is a real contradiction; 'Tis this that lays a ſtumbling-block at the Doors of our Church, encourageth and hardens our Enemies, who will not eaſily be reconciled to our Religion or our Principles, while they ſee no better effects in our Lives and Practices. 'Tis this that makes them reproach our Worſhip, as a cold and formal Service; whereas did they ſee us frequent the publick Offices of Religion with an awful Reverence and Devotion, and exemplary in our Lives for Vertue and Goodneſs, they would be induced to believe that we have a real concernment for Religion, and that God is in us of a truth: but we can never make them believe that we are the ſervants of the Living God, or have a juſt ſenſe of Devotion, while they ſee that we have nothing to diſtinguiſh us from the Worſhippers of a falſe God, but a better Name and worſe Vices.

Beſides, we may conſider, we of this Church cannot be wicked at ſo cheap a rate and upon ſo eaſie terms as other men: To be an ill man in thoſe Communions whoſe Principles and Notions of Religion do naturally tend to debauch mens Conſciences, and make them looſe and careleſs in their lives, is not ſo great a wonder. But for him that is born and Catechized in the Church of *England*; a Church that has made the ſtricteſt Proviſion for Holineſs and good life, where he may be as devout and good a man as in any Church in the World; and cannot be wicked, without the greateſt contradiction to his Principles: I ſay, to be an ill man in this Church, and under theſe happy circumſtances, muſt needs add weight and aggravation to his guilt. And

And therefore, as we have any regard to the Honour of Religion, the Credit of our Cauſe, our Brethrens Welfare, or our own eternal Intereſt, let us ſhew to the World the influence of our Principles; and that as we have the beſt Church, ſo we are men of the beſt Lives.

* *Now to God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Ghoſt, be aſcribed by us and all Mankind, all Honour, Glory and Praiſe, henceforth, and for evermore,* Amen.

FINIS.